

## Dr. Burgess Weekly Address January 26, 2018

### Ensuring Emergency Preparedness

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Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

Two weeks ago, I am sure that many of you saw the startling news reports from Hawaii that a missile was incoming to the state. This warning, dispatched by the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to cell phones, thankfully turned out to be a false alarm. However, it took an unbelievable 38 minutes to correct this mistake. In the meantime, the people of Hawaii and visitors prepared for the worst.

Again, I am thankful that this emergency was a false alarm. But, the truth is that it should never have happened in the first place. To prevent further mistakes, we are taking several steps at the federal level to ensure that this needless chaos does not happen again – in Hawaii or anywhere across the United States. The Federal Communications Commission has opened an investigation into the event. When completed, this report will give us in Congress the full picture of how such a mistake came about. Also, Congress is taking steps to update personnel training to ensure that those who are tasked with communicating during an emergency are equipped to do so.

This incident raised questions about our country's general preparedness and emergency infrastructure. Last week, I met with Dr. Robert Kadlec, the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the Department of Health and Human Services. During our meeting, we talked about this false alarm, as well as the necessity for health care networks to prepare for disasters of any scale. On every level, we must have plans in place to ensure that our first responders, doctors, surgeons, communicators, community leaders, and other emergency personnel have adequate infrastructure, training, and plans to mobilize and respond to any event in a timely and efficient fashion.

Last week's false alarm is a good reminder that we all should be prepared for emergencies. It also reinforced the importance of testing our emergency alert systems. North Texas recently has faced some severe winter weather, and as we inch closer to spring we are nearing tornado season. We are reminded that each family should have a plan for disasters.

The Department of Homeland Security has information on how to prepare for events ranging from extreme weather to chemical accidents. To learn more about how to prepare for emergencies, please visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

The mistake in Hawaii raised a number of questions within Congress about the capabilities of our government's communications. While the alert in this case was, thankfully, a false

alarm, Congress owes it to the American people to conduct oversight so that the government remains at its best to serve its citizens.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your concerns on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, and as the song says, God bless you Texas.